



MEDIA RELEASE

City Parks & Recreation Commission Recognizes Volunteers at March Meeting

SANTA BARBARA, CA – 4/2/13

At each monthly meeting, the Parks & Recreation Commission recognizes those community organizations and individuals who have supported projects and programs of the Parks and Recreation Department with their time, treasure and/or talents. On Wednesday, March 27, the Commission recognized Reef and Run, Francisco Aguilera and the East Beach Grill for their financial support of the Santa Barbara Junior Lifeguard program.

The Santa Barbara Junior Lifeguard program, offered every summer at East Beach, has gained local and regional recognition as a premier Junior Lifeguard program in California and serves as a highlight of the many aquatic programs offered to the community by the Parks and Recreation Department. The program currently serves over 350 youth between the ages of 9-17 years, an increase of 100 participants or 42% over the past four years. A consequence of having a strong participation is insuring adequate equipment is available to keep all of the participants safe and engaged in daily program activities. It became a necessity to increase the amount of protective sun shade canopies to protect the participants during program hours, which span the most intense sun period of the day. It was also necessary to purchase additional program paddleboards and rescue buoys to keep participants engaged in the same activity without long waits for equipment.

Beginning in 2010, East Beach Grill owner Francisco Aguilera began donating \$5,000 annually to assist with the purchase of additional program equipment and sun canopies. In the past three years, the East Beach Grill has donated a total of \$15,000 to this program through the PARC Foundation. These annual donations resulted in the purchase of three new high quality sun shade canopies, additional sun shade coverings, and 15 new paddleboards.

In 2012, the Reef and Run Organizing Committee changed the focus of their weekly run/swim event and began working to make it a premier summer swim event. The organizing committee wanted to bring participants to East Beach to capitalize on the great swimming conditions, the Bathhouse amenities, and

the East Beach Grill. The committee organized a partnership with the Santa Barbara Junior Lifeguard program to fully encompass all of the great things synonymous with East Beach. The partnership required the Junior Lifeguard instructors to seek out volunteers from our older age category who were looking for community service hours. Once volunteers were identified, they were scheduled weekly to assist Reef and Run organizers at the event registration tables and the finish line recording. In exchange for their contribution to Reef and Run, Junior Lifeguard volunteers received much needed community service hours to assist with their school requirements, and the program received a generous \$1,000 donation through the PARC Foundation to be used for future equipment purchases.

The donations received from the East Beach Grill and the Reef and Run Organizing Committee have made it possible for the Junior Lifeguard program to continue providing a premier program in our community. The additional equipment purchases have ensured that all participants are engaged in activities while they learn lifesaving and competition techniques in a fun and positive environment. The addition of three sun protection canopies and two shade structures ease many parents concerns as they arrive at East Beach to drop off their child for a program that is offered across the most intense sun period of the day.

It was with great gratitude that the Parks and Recreation Commission recognized these individuals and groups for their incredible support of important youth aquatic programming in the community.

Photo: Volunteers Jane Cairns, Reef & Run CEO and Francisco Aguilera, East Beach Grill Owner.



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